

APPENDIX J

EVALUATING LEAD-BASED PAINT HAZARDS

The U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development (HUD) completed a national survey of residential units to measure potential lead-based paint poisoning in 1990. The survey only included units built before 1979, after which lead-based paint was no longer allowed in residential buildings. HUD's survey estimated that approximately 173,000 housing units in Seattle were likely to have lead-based paint (67% of all units), about one-half owner-occupied units and one-half renter-occupied. The survey showed little difference in the percentage of lead-based paint in housing units affordable across income levels. Of units occupied by extremely and very low-income households (0-50% of MI), 69% were estimated to have lead-based paint, compared to 55% of units occupied by low-income households (51-80% of MI), and 71% of units occupied by households with incomes above 80% of MI.

In the mid-1990s, Public Health–Seattle & King County conducted an epidemiological study of the blood lead level in children in the tri-county area and found that 4% of children tested had levels above the minimum threshold. No children had lead levels considered to be poisonous and none required medical treatment. In most cases, the Department of Public Health helped families identify sources of lead problems and provided educational materials.

In 1994, the State's Department of Health instituted a three-year monitoring system to obtain information on lead poisoning based on data from both public and private health systems. The City is not aware of any reports of lead poisoning in children based on such monitoring.

HUD issued a new rule in September 1999 to further protect young children from lead-based paint hazards in federally-funded housing. It issued new prohibited methods of paint removal for rehab programs. The new rule took effect September 2000. Seattle's Office of Housing (OH) has taken the following actions to implement the new federal regulations related to lead-based paint:

- Implemented HUD's prohibited practices requirements.
- Convened an interdepartmental work group to draft guidelines and policies, which were adopted in 2001.
- Developed implementation strategies in conjunction with Public Health–Seattle & King County.
- Adopted a construction requirement that all projects funded by OH comply with the new regulations.
- Sent appropriate City staff to HUD-sponsored training. Two OH staff are EPA-certified risk assessors.
- Prepared lead-based paint educational material for distribution to nonprofit agencies and private contractors on an ongoing basis.

- Sponsored ongoing workshop training sessions for nonprofit agencies and private contractors. Ninety-four contractors and crewmembers have attended OH-sponsored lead safe work practice training. Fourteen weatherization contractors and crew have taken lead awareness training. Three contractors have been trained and certified as abatement supervisor, and four crewmembers have been trained and certified as abatement workers. OH contracts with contractors participating in the City's HomeWise Program require lead safe training (training costs are covered by OH).